



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

- 1. Feedlot producers open house rescheduled for March 3**
 - 2. Public asked to attend meetings on improving the Big Sioux River**
 - 3. Landowners: Keep that CRP letter and opportunity**
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Note to Editors: This is a joint news release from the Iowa Beef Center, the Iowa Cattlemen's Association and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

For more information, contact:

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Evan Vermeer at the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, (515) 296-2266; or

Dan Stipe at the Atlantic DNR field office, (515) 243-1934.

FEEDLOT PRODUCERS OPEN HOUSE RESCHEDULED FOR MARCH 3

CARROLL – Cattlemen and other open feedlot producers in the Carroll County area are invited to an open house to address water quality issues on March 3.

The meeting will be held at the National Guard Armory from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 1712 LeClark Road, just off Highway 30 on the west side of Carroll. The open house was originally scheduled for a week earlier in Dedham, but was cancelled because of bad weather.

“This meeting is designed to bring all the resources that can help producers evaluate their current operation and identify ways to improve their lots,” said John Lawrence, director of the Iowa Beef Center, Iowa State University. “From planning an open feedlot to funding improvements and maintenance tips, we should have something for everyone.”

Lawrence added that there is a lot of interest in expanding feedlots and in improving feedlot design to improve cattle performance and environmental protection. One of the sessions will feature success stories from other producers.

“The focus of the meeting is for producers to get answers to their questions, pick up ideas from other producers on successful lot designs and maintenance, and learn about resources available to help them make changes to their current operation,” said Evan Vermeer, vice president of the Iowa Cattlemen’s Association.

Producers are encouraged to attend a short opening session and registration, then rotate through any of eight different stations designed to answer their questions about stewardship, management and technical issues.

“For example, if a producer is interested in making improvements to a lot, the funding station will feature people who can answer questions about low interest loans and the federal cost share Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP). By putting all the experts at one station, producers looking for funding sources can find the best fit for their needs,” said Dan Stipe, supervisor of the Atlantic DNR field office.

The Dedham Cooperative, in conjunction with the Iowa Cattlemen’s Association, Iowa State Extension and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, is sponsoring the meeting.

Topics include site planning, technical advice and resources, feedlot design, operation and maintenance, funding and financing sources, producer success stories, expectations, the economic benefit of manure, and monitoring results/data.

More information is available on the DNR Web site at www.iowadnr.com.

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PUBLIC ASKED TO ATTEND MEETINGS ON IMPROVING THE BIG SIOUX RIVER

Public comment period extended on water quality improvement plan

DES MOINES – The DNR will hold two public meetings to gather Iowans’ input on a draft plan to improve water quality in the Big Sioux River.

The meetings are scheduled for March 9 at the following locations:

- Rock Rapids: 1 p.m., Rock Rapids Community Center, 404 First Ave.
- Hawarden: 6 p.m., Hawarden Community Center, 1150 Central Ave.

High bacteria levels are the main cause of water quality problems in the Big Sioux River, located in northwest Iowa. Those bacteria indicate that waste from wildlife, livestock, birds and humans is in the water. The bacteria come from sources throughout the

watershed, or area of land that drains into the river. Those sources include treated wastewater, rain and snow runoff from areas with wildlife and livestock, and leaking septic systems.

The DNR has developed a draft water quality plan, also known as a TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards. The plan includes information on how conservation efforts in the watershed can improve water quality.

Iowans can submit comments on the Big Sioux River plan via e-mail, phone or mail (contact information below). The public comment period has been extended from March 6 to March 17.

The draft plan and supporting documents can be obtained through:

Internet: www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/tmdl/publicnotice.html

E-mail: william.graham@dnr.state.ia.us

Telephone: William Graham at (515) 281-5917

Mail: William Graham, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

After receiving public comments, the DNR will forward the draft plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

For more information, contact Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791.

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Note to Editors: The DNR also transmitted this news release in Iowa Outdoors on Feb. 14.

LANDOWNERS: KEEP THAT CRP LETTER AND OPPORTUNITY

DES MOINES – Landowners with existing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts that expire in 2007 should have received a letter from their USDA Farm Service Agency recently.

“Don’t throw it away,” said Lyle Asell, special assistant for agriculture at the DNR.

“That letter lays out an offer for the automatic re-enrollment or an extension of your CRP contract, an offer that many landowners will want to take advantage of.”

Landowners must notify their local Farm Service Agency by April 14, 2006, if they want to accept their re-enrollment or extension.

CRP participants with contracts expiring in 2008 and beyond will be notified later about their opportunities to re-enroll or extend their contracts.

“For the public, these lands protect our water quality, by reducing the amounts of sediment, nutrients and pesticides that reach our streams and lakes,” said Asell. “For landowners, the contract offers guaranteed income on marginal land where yields are typically less than on land more suitable for cropping.”

Landowners who receive the letter will receive one of two offers:

- Re-enrollment for those with the most vulnerable soils that yield the greatest environmental benefits if they remain in CRP. Those contracts will be offered for 10 years with restored wetlands eligible for 15 years, under a revised rental rate often higher than previous rates. Landowners will have to maintain the cover with mid-contract management (i.e., mowing or burning in the middle of the contract).
- Extensions for land that is less erosive or has a less beneficial cover type. Extensions are offered for two to five years at the existing rental rate.

Landowners can not amend the USDA contract offers by adding additional land, changing the length of the contract or with different terms for the contract. However, landowners can re-enroll or extend only part of the current acres under contract.

The DNR has wildlife biologists and foresters who can answer questions about enrollment. Call (515) 281-5918 for the name of a biologist near you or contact your local USDA Farm Service Agency office for assistance.

Both offers are subject to a compliance check, with a site visit from USDA.

For media inquiries, contact Kelly Smith, Iowa DNR, at (515) 281-6247.